

Correspondence

MADISON, Wis., April 30, 1913.

DEAR FRIEND:—If you are interested in birds and desire to have your name included on our mailing list for future circular letters concerning the conservation of birds or appeals for advice with regard to same, will you kindly drop me a card?

1. Thanks to the coöperation of Professor I. N. Mitchell's observers as listed in the 1912 Arbor and Bird Day Annual, the Wisconsin Conservation Commission, Doctor T. S. Palmer, et al. of the U. S. Biological Survey, obtained January 9, 1913, President Taft's signature to an Executive Order creating Gravel Island Reservation, Wis. This includes Gravel and Spider Islands. An officer of the National Association of Audubon Societies anticipated us by getting an Executive Order, February 21, 1912, to create the Green Bay Reserve, otherwise known as Hog Island. About fourteen acres of unsurveyed islands are now permanent Federal reserves, breeding gulls and terns. Wisconsin still lacks state reservations. \$150 will buy a gull rookery, Gull Island, edge of the Apostle Islands, Lake Superior, and \$2000 will buy North Strawberry Island, opposite the state park in Door County. Who can help?

2. What other colonial birds are worthy of state protection? Where? Who owns land? The Biological Survey asks where black terns breed, but no information as to owner of such lands is at hand. What further legislation for Wisconsin? Are you ready for the question to remove all shore birds (*Limicolæ*) and hen-like birds (*Phasianidæ*), at least the Bob-white and Prairie Hen, to the non-game list because of greater value to agricultural interests. Bills for wild game propagation or conservation are faring poorly at the legislature for lack of popular interest. If you don't want such bills, what seems to you better? The Biological Survey did work in Wisconsin last year so that in future more local information should be had. The Agricultural Appropriation Bill at Washington passed both Houses of Congress the month past and with it the migratory bird bill attached as a rider, now a law since March 9. Get a free copy through the U. S. Biol. Surv. This law means stopping of the southern slaughter of robins and smaller birds, we sincerely hope. It will probably prevent spring shooting in all states, although I have no authority for saying so.

3. Wisconsin was first to prohibit shooting for millinery (1887), among the first three to have salaried wardens (1887), of the first seven to prohibit spring shooting (1887), of the first eight to adopt the model law for protecting non-game birds (1901), of the first

eight to prohibit the sale of protected game (1903), fifteenth to obtain A Federal Bird Reserve (1912), although over fifty such reservations had been already created elsewhere in the United States, and though first in idea, yet of the first three to have a scientific summer school for game wardens (1912).

4. Wisconsin boasts the first thorough student of economic ornithology in the United States, the late F. H. King, Professor of Soils, Wisconsin University. The good work of Prof. S. A. Forbes of Illinois, began a year or two later than 1873, though published (1876) before King's work was out (1883), entombed in the state's four-volume work on "The Geology of Wisconsin."

5. Wisconsin's first close season for Prairie Chicken was in 1851. Since then, game laws have grown stricter, the non-game birds being removed from all molestation at all times, save by scientific permit. The quail should become a farm bird, since he eats about five pounds of insect pests and 9.75 pounds of weed seeds per year, a work valued from \$10 to \$20 a year per bird. Wisconsin's quail was being shot for game when it was most needed to help save the wheat crop from entire collapse in the chinch bug epidemic of the early seventies. A single quail has eaten 5000 chinch bugs at a meal.

6. The estimated annual insect loss for Wisconsin runs between \$13,000,000 and \$40,000,000. With this, link the value of birds and insectivorous mammals slaughtered in Wisconsin in 1912, \$1,000,000. This figure decreases as the former increases. Already, our bird population is at least 20% less than it was.

I shall understad that no answer in the course of eight weeks will mean that you have no immediate suggestion.

A statement from me as to the possible moves that might be made in the progress of bird conservation, you will find in the newly issued Arbor and Bird Day Annual for 1913, obtained through the office of the State Superintendent of Schools.

Yours sincerely,

A. C. BURRILL,
Lecturer on Economic Relation of Birds.